

## Queensland Academy of Sport Bill 2025

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<b>Submitted by:</b>	Gold Coast Academy of Sport
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Thank you for this opportunity for the Gold Coast Academy of Sport Limited (GCAS) to present this submission to the Queensland Academy of Sport (QAS) Bill 2025.

In supporting the contents and intents of the Bill we also propose greater alignment between the QAS and GCAS as this state makes its preparations for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games and its sporting future beyond.

As you will read in this submission, we believe working more closely with the QAS, in formal alignment, is an opportunity to be had with the mutual benefits immense.

David Eckersley  
Board Chair

Glynis Nunn OAM OLY  
Executive Director

### **GCAS support for the Queensland Academy of Sport Bill 2025 and the opportunities for a *true partnership***

We consider the introduction of the Queensland Academy of Sport Bill 2025 a significant and positive development for Queensland's sporting community. As such, GCAS fully supports the objectives and functions outlined therein.

The primary reason for GCAS supporting the Bill, which will allow QAS to operate as a stand-alone statutory body, is the opportunity for the State Government, through the QAS structure, to build a comprehensive and robust network of regional sporting academy's to identify, foster and ultimately provide QAS with a production line of sporting talent to further develop into elite athletes.

GCAS was established in 2009 with the aim of providing a pathway for athletes to excel in their chosen sports, offering specialised programs designed to nurture talent, foster personal growth, provide holistic education and ultimately support them in achieving their sporting ambitions, including participation in future Olympic and Paralympic Games. Refer to Appendix A that provides a snapshot of GCAS has and continues to play in developing junior sporting talent on the Gold Coast.

The ultimate objectives / charter for QAS outlined in the Bill mirror the objectives of GCAS. For a number of years, GCAS has seen our role very much aligned with QAS in terms of assisting to produce and identify young elite athletes that ultimately perform on the world stage representing Queensland. GCAS is involved at the grassroots of sport, working with numerous sporting bodies to run programs to better equip young athletes with the holistic personal and life skills required to transition to an elite athlete.

Currently GCAS is one of two regional academies operating in QLD. There is currently no synergies that exist between GCAS and QAS in terms of:-

- Elite talent identification
- Coordination of sporting programs
- Coaching development
- No state government based funding directly or through QAS

This has been frustrating as it has been abundantly clear to GCAS that we need to be working in partnership with QAS to achieve objectives that are shared to improve athlete's performances.

Despite numerous attempts by GCAS over many years to push for more alignment with QAS both from an operational and funding perspective, nothing has eventuated. Post the

announcement of Brisbane being awarded the 2032 Olympic Games, QAS reached out to GCAS immediately and began high level discussions as to how both organisations can work together to foster Gold Coast based talent through to the QAS system. These seemed to be very promising discussions and finally a commonsense approach to producing Queensland talent with identification of talent being assisted by GCAS at a regional level appeared to be forming. As soon as the discussions started, they then stopped with no explanation from QAS. We can only put this cessation of communication down to the structure of QAS and their inability to alter its then charter of operations.

We have had little communication since this time and we were disappointed that communication ceased, however we view any structural change to QAS that enables it to be more nimble in its strategic direction can only be a positive outcome. Specifically, if this Bill enables QAS to review Queensland elite sport identification and how programs operate across the state to ensure the best talent from every region of Queensland is identified and fostered, then we are very much in support of this Bill.

GCAS strongly believes that an alignment with QAS would create efficiencies, reduce duplication, and allow both organisations to pool resources to achieve better outcomes for athletes. With shared values, including a focus on athlete wellbeing, performance, and development, a closer partnership with the QAS would allow for a more coordinated approach to developing and high-performance sport in Queensland. This would benefit not only athletes but also the broader sporting community, fostering a culture of excellence that would inspire future generations of Queensland athletes and coaches. In the lead up to Brisbane 2032. It could also enable cross relations with athletes transferring to other sports where their abilities would better suit.

If a QAS / GCAS partnership is formalised, we believe that this partnership model could be used as a blueprint for regional academy expansion across Queensland. This would ensure all Queensland athletes no matter where they are based are offered the same opportunities to develop into an elite athlete. The synergies and efficiencies that could be gained by such a model cannot be understated. To have a clearer understanding of how a network of regional academies would provide the ultimate pathway for elite athletes through to QAS, a study of the current New South Wales model should be undertaken. More detail on this is provided in Appendix B.

### **Conclusion and submission summary**

GCAS fully supports the objectives of the Queensland Academy of Sport Bill 2025. The proposed functions align seamlessly with GCAS's mission and values, and we are eager to explore opportunities for collaboration with the QAS to further develop Queensland's athletes, coaches, and sporting infrastructure.

The introduction of the Bill represents a critical step forward for high-performance sport in Queensland, and GCAS is committed to working alongside the QAS to maximise the impact of these initiatives for the benefit of Queensland athletes and the broader sporting community. By strengthening the relationship between the GCAS and the QAS, we can ensure that Queensland remains at the forefront of high-performance sport both nationally and internationally.

**Finally, if there was an opportunity for our Executive Director, 1984 Olympic gold medallist Glynis Nunn, to be witness to the public hearing on Tuesday 25 March, an invitation would be greatly appreciated.**

## **APPENDIX A: Academy Snapshot & Infographics**

### **The Gold Coast Academy of Sport – a snapshot**

Since establishment in 2009, the Gold Coast Academy of Sport (GCAS) has been a leader dedicated to supporting the development and success of emerging and elite athletes in South-East Queensland.

Established with the focus of providing high-performance training and development opportunities, GCAS has become a key player in the sporting landscape of the Gold Coast and surrounding area.

GCAS serves as a pathway for athletes to excel in their chosen sports, offering specialised programs designed to nurture talent, foster personal growth, provide holistic education and ultimately support them in achieving their sporting ambitions, including participation in future Olympic and Paralympic Games.

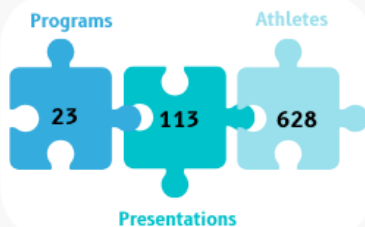
In addition to its focus on athlete development, GCAS provides a comprehensive suite of support services, including strength and conditioning, sports science presentations, sports medicine, sports psychology and other wellbeing initiatives.

Our programs are underpinned by a multi-disciplinary approach that emphasises the holistic development of pre-elite athletes, ensuring they are not only physically prepared but mentally resilient and well-equipped to navigate the challenges of high-performance sport.

GCAS has also made significant strides in developing the coaching and educational capabilities of aspiring sports professionals. Through targeted programs aimed at coaching development, the Academy helps to create a strong pool of future leaders who can contribute to the growth and success of Australian sport at the school, regional, domestic and international levels.

Research tells us that on average it takes an athlete 10-12 years to progress to the point of standing on the podium. We also know that the snapshot of a successful Olympian is one that is regionally based and aged 23-27 years old, meaning that the majority of the future 2032 Australian Olympic team are currently 14-18 years old. 90% of Regional Academy athletes are in this age bracket as we sit eight years from the Brisbane Games. Therefore, a significant investment into their pathway development must be committed now so we can succeed in Brisbane and reap the benefits of this legacy for years to come.

# GCAS 2024 Snapshot



## Participation

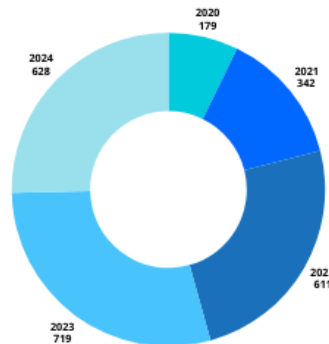
2.8%  
Increase

Growth increase from 2022 - 2024



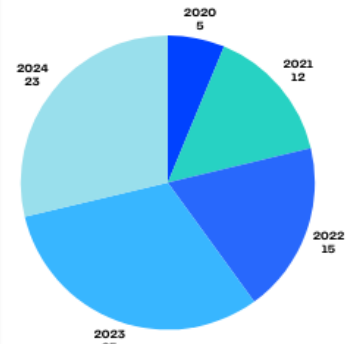
Total participant numbers 2024

## Overall Participation Achievements 2020-2024

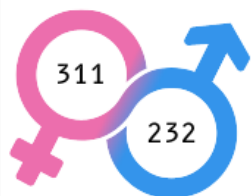


\*Please note that 2020 was a COVID affected year

## Number of Sports Programs Delivered 2020-2024



## Gender Participation



Not Collected 78

Please note 5 participants  
cross over programs thus  
Gender qty is less than overall  
participation numbers of 628

### 2024

1. Rugby Union
2. Rugby League Referees
3. Junior Netball
4. Ignite Senior Netball
5. Bond Uni Netball Sprinting
6. Bond Uni Cubs Program Presentations
7. Future Stars 1
8. Future Stars 2
9. Basketball
10. BMX
11. Gold Coast Recreation & Sport Athletics
12. A.B. Paterson Athletics Camp
13. A.B. Paterson Brumbies Athletes Years 9-12
14. UCSC Future Stars Year 7-9
15. Little Athletics Australia Presentations
- 16 -23. Sprint clinics x8

### 2023

1. Rugby Union
2. Rugby League Referees
3. Equestrian
4. Senior Netball
5. Junior Netball
6. Junior Netball Phase 2
7. Future Stars 1
8. Future Stars 2
9. Extension Future Stars
10. Gold Coast District Cricket
11. 2-Day Basketball
12. Girls Basketball
13. South Coast Netball Scholarship
14. South Coast Netball Junior rep
15. UCSC Future Stars
16. Surf Life Saving QLD
17. BMX
18. Gymnastics
- 19 -26. Sprint clinics x8

### 2022

1. Rugby Union
  2. UCSC Future Stars
  3. PSSC Future Stars
  4. Pony Club
  5. Future Stars
  6. Speed Clinic x5
  7. GCRLRA
  8. Taekwondo
  9. Basketball
  10. Future Stars 2.0
  11. Special Olympics Athletic
  12. Little Athletics camp
  13. High Jump Seminar
  14. BMX
  15. Rugby 7s
- (Crossed over from 2021)

### 2021

1. BMX
2. Rugby League
3. Rugby Union
4. UCSC Future Stars
5. PSSC Future Stars
6. Pony Club
7. Future Stars
8. Hockey
9. Speed Clinic
10. Rugby 7s
11. GCRLRA
12. Taekwondo

### 2020

1. BMX
2. Rugby League
3. Rugby Union
4. UCSC Future Stars
5. PSSC Future Stars

## **APPENDIX B**

For QLD to commit to healthier pathways for our FUTURE CHAMPIONS, the buy in and engagement of all pathway system partners is critical. There is a need to further study the NSW model of sport from development to elite through the FTEM Model.

In NSW athletes are fortunate to be supported by a vast number of support organisations and individuals who work across the region to provide multiple services, resources and facilities to our pathway performers. The athletes are supported through eleven (11) Regional Academies who are provided financial support from a number of key areas – Government, NSWIS, Council, private sector sponsors, State Sporting Organisations and Universities. Two of these Academies are operating

While these are the Key System Partners, there are many organisations working with NSW athletes to assist them in their journey.

The New South Wales Institute of Sport (NSWIS) is an elite sporting organisation that supports NSW and NSW-based Australian athletes to become the world's best. NSWIS supports targeted nationally identified athletes and local talent through coaching, performance support and innovative training environments within their own region. The Institute works in collaboration with sport both nationally and state based to create and deliver high performance support and environments for NSW based athletes. The NSWIS plays a key role in supporting nationally categorised Australian athletes from the Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth Games' sports.

Eleven Regional Academies of Sport operate across the state of NSW to provide holistic pathways to excellence for young pre-elite athletes. Offering a variety of sporting programs, Regional Academies prepare talented young pre-elite athletes for the rigours of the elite levels of their chosen sport. Regional Academies assist young sports people overcome barriers to technical, educational and personal development by providing localised programs, access to learning resources, camps and competitions.

There is much to learn from this system which could provide the blueprint for Regional Academies throughout Queensland to help with the development of young athletes towards the 2032 Olympics and Paralympics in Brisbane. There needs to be a clear and harmonious partnership established based on respect and understanding of each other's roles. Creating a closer relationship with the QAS into regional areas would benefit a greater connection for all sports with positive outcomes to be seen in the years leading into the home Olympics and Paralympics.